WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A frame and support structure for a vehicle having a longitudinal axis, said frame and support structure comprising:

spaced-apart first and second side sill assemblies extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle;

spaced-apart first and second frame members extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, said first and second frame members being disposed between the first and second side sill assemblies;

and,

at least one lateral support assembly that includes:

first and second outriggers, said first outrigger extending between the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, and said second outrigger extending between the second side sill assembly and the second frame member;

a cross member extending between the first and second frame members; and

a first bulkhead disposed in the first side sill assembly and a second bulkhead disposed in the second side sill assembly.

2. The frame and support structure according to claim 1, wherein the at least one lateral support assembly comprises front, mid and rear support assemblies.

3. The frame and support structure according to claim 1, wherein opposing ends of the cross member are secured to the first and second frame members, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the first outrigger are secured to the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the second outrigger are secured to the second side sill assembly and the second frame member, respectively.

4. The frame and support structure according to claim 3, wherein the cross member is aligned with the first and second outriggers.

5. The frame and support structure according to claim 4, wherein each of the first and second frame members is generally U-shaped and includes a pair of spaced-apart arms, between which are disposed a pair of braces that are aligned with the cross member.

6. The frame and support structure according to claim 3, wherein the first and second side sill assemblies each comprise inner and outer side sill members with a hollow area defined therebetween, and wherein the first bulkhead is secured between the inner and outer side sill members of the first side sill assembly and the second bulkhead is secured between the inner and outer side sill members of the second side sill assembly.

7. The frame and support structure according to claim 6, wherein the at least one lateral support assembly comprises front, mid and rear support assemblies.

8. The frame and support structure according to claim 7, wherein the front and rear support assemblies each further comprise a third bulkhead disposed proximate to, but spaced from, the first bulkhead, and a fourth bulkhead disposed proximate to, but spaced from, the second bulkhead.

9. The frame and support structure according to claim 8, wherein the front support assembly further comprises an upper beam member that extends between the first and second side sill assemblies.

10. The frame and support structure according to claim 1, wherein the first and second outriggers each have a generally U-shaped cross-section.

11. The frame and support structure according to claim 10, wherein the cross member has a generally U-shaped cross-section.

12. A vehicle having a longitudinal axis, said vehicle comprising:

front and rear doors, each of which is movable between open and closed positions;

spaced-apart first and second side sill assemblies disposed below the front and rear doors and extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle;

spaced-apart first and second frame members extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, said first and second frame members being disposed between the first and second side sill assemblies;

and,

at least one lateral support assembly that includes:

first and second outriggers, said first outrigger extending between the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, and said second outrigger extending between the second side sill assembly and the second frame member;

a cross member extending between the first and second frame members; and

a first bulkhead disposed in the first side sill assembly and a second bulkhead disposed in the second side sill assembly.

13. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein the at least one lateral support assembly comprises front, mid and rear support assemblies, said front and rear support assemblies being aligned with the front and rear doors, respectively, and said mid support assembly being disposed at a juncture between the front and rear doors when the front and rear doors are in the closed positions.

14. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein opposing ends of the cross member are secured to the first and second frame members, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the first outrigger are secured to the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the second outrigger

are secured to the second side sill assembly and the second frame member, respectively.

15. The vehicle according to claim 14, wherein the cross member is aligned with the first and second outriggers.

16. The vehicle according to claim 15, wherein each of the first and second frame members is generally U-shaped and includes a pair of spaced-apart arms, between which are disposed a pair of braces that are aligned with the cross member.

17. The vehicle according to claim 14, wherein the first and second side sill assemblies each comprise inner and outer side sill members with a hollow area defined therebetween, and wherein the first bulkhead is secured between the inner and outer side sill members of the first side sill assembly and the second bulkhead is secured between the inner and outer side sill members of the second side sill assembly.

18. The vehicle according to claim 17, further comprising a floor, and wherein the front support assembly further comprises an upper beam member that is disposed over the floor and extends between the first and second side sill assemblies.

19. The vehicle according to claim 12, wherein the front and rear doors are disposed on one side of the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, and wherein the vehicle further comprises a front body panel disposed forward of the front door, a rear body

panel disposed rearward of the rear door and a top beam disposed above the front and rear doors, and wherein the front body panel, the rear body panel and the top beam cooperate to help define an enlarged door opening.

20. The vehicle according to claim 19, wherein the front door is pivotally secured to the front body panel and the rear door is pivotally secured to the rear body panel, and wherein when the front and rear doors are in the open positions, the enlarged door opening is available for ingress and egress to and from the vehicle.

21. The vehicle according to claim 20, further comprising a roof arch secured to the top beam, and wherein the rear door further comprises a vertically-oriented beam that is aligned with the roof arch when the rear door is in the closed position.

22. The vehicle according to claim 21, further comprising upper and lower latching assemblies that connect the top beam and one of the first and second side sill assemblies to the beam of the rear door, respectively, when the rear door is in the closed position.

23. The vehicle according to claim 22, further comprising another pair of front and rear doors and another top beam, all of which are disposed on the other side of the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, and wherein the roof arch extends laterally across the vehicle and is secured between the top beams.

24. A vehicle having a longitudinal axis, said vehicle comprising:

front and rear doors, each of which is movable between open and closed positions;

a floor;

spaced-apart first and second side sill assemblies disposed below the front and rear doors and extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle;

spaced-apart first and second frame members disposed below the floor and extending generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, said first and second frame members being disposed between the first and second side sill assemblies;

and,

a lateral support assembly that includes:

first and second outriggers disposed below the floor, said first outrigger extending between the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, and said second outrigger extending between the second side sill assembly and the second frame member;

a cross member disposed below the floor and extending between the first and second frame members;

an upper beam member that is disposed over the floor and extends between the first and second side sill assemblies; and

a first bulkhead disposed in the first side sill assembly and a second bulkhead disposed in the second side sill assembly.

25. The vehicle of claim 24, wherein opposing ends of the cross member are secured to the first and second frame members, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the first outrigger are secured to the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, respectively, and wherein opposing ends of the second outrigger are secured to the second side sill assembly and the second frame member, respectively.

26. The vehicle according to claim 25, wherein the cross member is aligned with the first and second outriggers.

27. The vehicle according to claim 26, wherein each of the first and second frame members is generally U-shaped and includes a pair of spaced-apart arms, between which are disposed a pair of braces that are aligned with the cross member.

28. The vehicle according to claim 24, wherein the front and rear doors are disposed on one side of the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, and wherein the lateral support assembly is a front lateral support assembly that is disposed about midway along the length of the front door when the front door is in the closed position.

29. The vehicle according to claim 28, further comprising:

a mid support assembly disposed at a juncture between the front and rear doors when the front and rear doors are in the closed positions; and

a rear support assembly disposed about midway along the length of the rear door when the rear door is in the closed position; and wherein the mid and rear support assemblies each comprise:

first and second outriggers disposed below the floor, said first outrigger extending between the first side sill assembly and the first frame member, and said second outrigger extending between the second side sill assembly and the second frame member;

a cross member disposed below the floor and extending between the first and second frame members; and

a first bulkhead disposed in the first side sill assembly and a second bulkhead disposed in the second side sill assembly.